

CONT. FROM PAGE 1.

per day on food and cleaning materials, which he reckoned was neither lavish nor niggardly and compared reasonable with similar hostels. After seven weeks the money from rents not spent on day to day expenses was safely in the bank and amounted to £1,400 or so. This he thought would be needed for rates, electricity and gas bills, repairs and maintenance, and only left a reasonable safety margin.

In other words they passed their test. This is what he told us. Was someone high up in the GLC disappointed at this report from Mr Beane? For the very next day the GLC wrote a letter saying their temporary licence was revoked and they must quit by 3 January.

The main question seems to be, is the hostel being run well or not?

The only people who can really answer that are - not the Press, not the GLC, but - the residents - and to some extent the neighbours. Are they getting good value for the £17.50 per week for full board and lodging? Much of this comes from the Social Security, so is public money, and the public are entitled to know they are getting good value too. Are the residents getting at least as good a deal as they would get anywhere else?

Class Prejudice?

Do the GLC accept that this is the most important question? Or do they have some prejudice against a group of working class people - mainly Irish, running their own organisation - do they have some class prejudice about what's "reputable" and what isn't?

Father Tanner alleges that Novo are still running the show. 'Carmel Carter is Novo' he said to us. Rumour has it, he says that Paddy O'Connor and the Irani brothers are still seen around. But he admits this is hearsay.

Carmel Carter says the Irani brothers are no longer around. She is still friends with Paddy O'Connor,



but he is not on the committee or in any way connected with the management. She says he is finished politically, because of all the mud that was flung at him. But he maintains his innocence and Carmel also feels the accusations were unjust - and are in fact unproven in a Court of Law. 'Novo were good people, doing a good job. They may have made some mistakes, but they were made scapegoats for political ends'.

He also says, 'What right have these people to dictate who shall be my friends?'

'What makes me bitter,' says Joseph, a hard-working member of the committee, 'is that in May, when the elections were on the Fleet Street "gutter press" as I call them, went mad to put down these small organ-

isations. They were like a pack of hounds. But now there's no election, they're not interested any more and won't even come and hear us make a statement about our side of the story.'

The committee now consists of six of the residents, from those who have been there for some time, one or two of the same people as before, and some brought in by Carmel to strengthen the committee - a social worker, a solicitor and a priest.

The other accusation made by the GLC and by Father Tanner is that they were met with aggression and violence when they went to take possession on 1 October. 1 October from all accounts was a very nasty occasion.

Father Tanner was of the view that drink added its influence to the

It means that in no circumstances will you be allowed to run your own affairs. Your houses will be transferred to a housing association. If it is not Rom, it will be another.

Since this has to happen, it is far better we do it in a peaceful and friendly way and then there will be the least possible disturbance in the lives of those who live with you. Their suffering and unhappiness, if there is yet another Court Action and Eviction Order, does not bear thinking of.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
Joseph E. Brown

events. Foster Bell, another active member of the committee, replies to that that it wasn't drink that made them angry, it was at 9.30 am after all. He said the GLC man accused them of creating a breach of the peace. They replied to him. 'No, there was no breach of the peace until you arrived here with the police and the bailiffs.'

Carmel says she takes referrals from Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham Social Services, and Probation Offices, and from all over. She asks why the authorities on the one hand are only too eager to use her services when they want a problem out of the way but on the other

hand are claiming or implying that she is not running the houses properly or honestly. That seems to be a good question! The group feel that there is a lot of hypocrisy in all this. 'They make a fuss about us and yet have given us no help at all. The only help we had was a grant of £50 that first October weekend, when we had to feed 50 people for two days on that money. They want us to do the dirty work for them and get no help, only hindrance, in doing it.'

This seems the crux of the matter to Hackney People's Press too. It's a controversial issue. For instance Father Tanner says he would want to put five paid professional social workers in there, and would have to raise something like another £10,000 per year from somewhere to do so. The group feel that with only a fraction of that kind of help they could do just as good a job. The class question comes in here. Why do the poor and destitute always have to go to the middle class professionals for help? Do they necessarily know best?

Ron Brown, MP, made a comment to her which does not throw much light on the subject either: 'So you're the Mrs Carter that I'm doing all the letter-writing about! You're doing a great job but for Christ's sake will you do it in some other borough? There is a green patch out in Bromley.' Joseph's wry comment was, 'We'd like Ron Brown to go elsewhere too!'

Unfortunately that is the attitude of many in authority - and many people generally - to single homeless people. If there were policies to provide housing more flexibly, for single people and groups and not always only for the traditional family, the possibility of exploiting people in this way would not even exist.

the battle of the backlands

The Mapledene area was the subject of a wholesale redevelopment plan by the Council in 1972. Successful opposition by the residents resulted in the area being made into a General Improvement Area with the result that money was made available for the improvement of existing houses.

Recently the Council proposed to build new housing in the Backlands. There are two sites involved; one between Mapledene Road and Lenthall

Road, the other between Albion Drive and Middleton Road. The Backlands is the strip of land between the ends of the back gardens. In the first case the land is already owned by the Council, but in order to increase the amount of housing, Hackney Council proposed to purchase a strip of the adjoining back gardens. In the second the strip is smaller and privately owned and the Compulsory Purchase would cover

this as well as the back gardens.

The Backlands Action Group was formed, acting for residents of both sites. They decided to fight the Council's proposals, not be-

cause they don't feel the land

should be utilized, but because they

saw no reason why back gardens

should be lost in the process.

In fact several alternative uses were

proposed: ranging from a pre-nursery

school to allotments or simply a

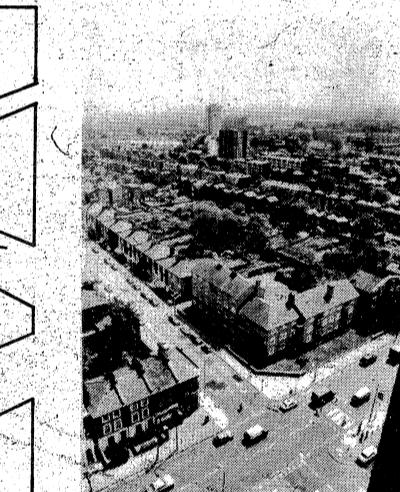
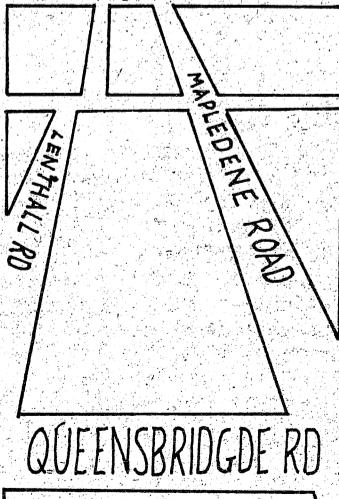
modified version of the Council's

plans. It was felt that in a borough

with a dramatically falling population

the loss of open space was both un-

desirable and unnecessary.



BETWEEN MIDDLETON ROAD AND ALBION DRIVE

The Council is attempting to compulsorily purchase a 45 ft strip of gardens on either side of the existing small Backlands area running at the bottom of the gardens.

A DOE inquiry was held at the end of November. The Council's case was that more housing was needed in the borough and they produced a variety of figures which attempted to show this.

However the Council's legendary inefficiency was shown once more when after four days in response to figures produced by the residents, they asked them to resubmit their figures!

The residents questioned the Council's figures; they objected to the lack of consultation between the Council and the residents over the plans; they objected to the loss of private space and greenery for the construction of 'people-hutches', and ultimately at the inquiry they objected to the cavalier manner with which the Council officers conducted themselves. It was felt that since the vast majority of the Council officers live outside the borough that decisions about the future of the borough could be more justifiably taken by the people who actually live here.

With 100 empty houses and house sites in Mapledene alone, we feel that the council has more than enough to do, to maintain and improve housing in Hackney. This destruction of the amenities of the borough, whilst failing to keep its housing stock in good order is grossly irresponsible.

BETWEEN LENTHALL ROAD AND MAPLEDENE ROAD

Not only is the Council attempting to compulsorily purchase a strip of gardens but also demolish a listed house. The derelict site of three houses in Middleton Road has been left vacant by the Council since the war.

short news

PARTNERSHIP

Voluntary and community groups in both Hackney and Islington are asking the two borough councils to ensure that they are consulted on how the £5 million partnership grant will be spent. This grant is the first instalment of a Department of the Environment (DOE) funding scheme announced recently to improve life in inner-city areas, such as Hackney.

The DOE has asked that consultations should take place between the community and the two councils in deciding allocation of the money. A committee has been set up from members of community and voluntary organisations and it is writing to Martin Ottolungui, the Council leader, to request that consultation between the community and the Council should take place "at the highest level" - in other words, community representatives should be invited to sit on the decision-making committee.

The first partnership meeting between the two councils, Hackney and Islington, and the DOE, along with representatives of the Area Health Authority, the GLC and ILFA is taking place on 16 January. Hackney's representatives are to be Councillors Martin Ottolungui, Steve Scott and Eddie Miller.

REFUGEES SUFFER FROM HOME OFFICE CUTS

At the Latin America Centre in Hoxton Square, Shoreditch, English classes for refugees from Latin America have been running for the past six months. The refugees come mainly from Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, and are all fleeing from repressive military dictatorships. Many of them have been in prison and have been tortured, and have relatives that have "disappeared".

When the refugees arrive in this country they find themselves in a completely new environment, unable to speak the language. English classes are a priority to enable the refugees to settle down as quickly as possible and start to live an independent life.

Until now the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office has been paying for an intensive six months basic English course for the refugees when they arrive, but the money for this was stopped suddenly just before Christmas. A campaign is being mounted to pressurise the Home Office to rescind their decision. We feel that language classes are an essential part of any rehabilitation programme, and that as the Government has accepted the responsibility of allowing this tiny number of refugees into

this country they should fulfil their commitment by ensuring language classes are available.

You can help by writing to your MP or writing direct to the Home Office.

For further information contact Sarah at Hackney People's Press, c/o Enterprise, 136 Kingsland High Street London E8.

HALF MOON BENEFIT

The Half Moon Theatre in Aldgate, whose plans to move into the Wilton's Music Hall were scrapped by the Tory GLC, has incurred considerable debts in its fight against its competitor the giant building firm Taylor Woodrow.

They are now holding a variety benefit at the York Hall, Bethnal Green, on Sunday 22 January at 7.30 pm. Many stars will be there, including Miriam Karlin, Anna Karen, Queenie Watts, Big Al, Frances de la Tour, Henry Woolf and the Belt 'n' Braces Rock Band. John H Strachey will be drawing a grand raffle.

The benefit is also in aid of the Save Bethnal Green Hospital Campaign. Tickets cost £2 each (worth every penny!) from Half Moon Theatre, 127 Alie Street, E1. Tel 480 6465/6726/6727.

STOKE NEWINGTON CENTRE

The Fire Station in Leswin Road, which Hackney Council bought from the GLC for an estimated £27,000, is going to be turned into a community centre for the area. The Council intends to spend £30,000 of the money which was allocated to it under the partnership scheme with Islington, on redecorating the building. It is hoped that plans can be drawn up by April, and that work could begin in the autumn.

It is expected that only the ground floor and the first floor will be used initially, but that the basement and the upper floors will have fire escapes fitted ready for these areas of the building to be put into use at a later date.

It is hoped that the centre will include a nursery, a youth club, a women's group, a steel band and majorettes, and it is expected that as the centre develops other users will move in eg an old people's lunch club.

There is a huge need in the area for such a centre and it is good news that in a year from now there might at last be some provision of community facilities in Stoke Newington.

Hundreds filled the Centerprise basement to see Rocky's Band and the Vommettes for the HPP Christmas Benefit which made a handy fifty quid to keep the paper going. Thanks to all who came, see you at the next one!



LEADING PUKE-ROCK BAND, THE VOMMETTES, IN ACTION.



Defiant sign in the window at Kingsland Road Fire Station

UP AGAINST 10%

At the time of writing the executive of the Fire Brigades Union have just decided to recall the national delegate conference, the body which has the power to call off the eight weeks old strike. The FBU executive is recommending that the firemen accept the Government's offer of 10% and a promise of more to come in November.

Whatever the decision of the firemen, it is clear that the FBU executive, which opposed the original strike call and has given only half-hearted leadership, will do all it can to get a settlement within the Government's 10% "guideline". The main part of the current offer, in addition to the 10%, is to peg the firemen's wages to that of the top quarter of industrial workers' wages - but only from next November. On top of that, the Tories have still not said that they will definitely be bound by this promise - and there is every chance of a General Election before November. If the firemen accept the offer, then they will only be guaranteed 10% (and there are strings attached as well) instead of the 30% they originally claimed. After two months of no wages a fireman's earnings will already be more than 10% down for the year.

One east London fireman told me that the current offer was just the same as the previous one. 'I was in favour of that, but the majority were against it. Now they've come back with the same - after three days of negotiation. It's just an insult'. Another joked 'We'll still be here next Christmas'.

Undoubtedly some firemen must be

feeling demoralised by their own leaders' lack of fight, and by the cynical way in which the TUC leadership, whilst claiming not to support the 10% limit, refused to help them. Many, however, are angry and more determined than ever - so the strike could still be won, for recently released figures show that the bill so far for increased fire damage is £50 million. This is more than it would have cost to pay the FBU's claim for a whole year, and clearly the Government cannot go on meeting this cost for ever. With the support of other workers refusing to work in dangerous jobs without a proper fire service, the firemen could make their strike even more effective - and call the Government's bluff.

If, on the other hand, the strike is called off with the 10% limit unbroken, it will not only be the firemen who suffer. All workers, particularly those in public service, will find it much more difficult to get wage rises which begin to make up for the massive loss in real earnings we have all suffered over the last few years. Already the Government is talking of continuing the "temporary" pay restrictions into 1979 - with a 5% limit - and yet prices (not to mention profits) are still rising much faster than wages.

A defeat for the firemen would be a blow to us all and would certainly mean many men leaving the service. A victory to the firemen would be a victory for all workers who want a decent living wage.

SUPPORT YOUR FIREMEN!

BATTERED WOMEN

The last refuge for battered women in Hackney was open for only five months before it was closed by fire in April of this year. Hackney has now been without a refuge for nearly twice that time.

Hackney Council have been very helpful in the past, renting Hackney Women's Aid a house to be used as a refuge. However, since the fire the original house and another one set aside for the same use have both been standing empty awaiting alterations.

A spokeswoman for Hackney Women's Aid said 'We have been told that the delay is due to work needed to comply with the GLC fire regulations for hostel accommodation. We are very concerned as to what is happening to Hackney women in the meantime. The national Open Door policy of the Women's Aid Federation means that women will always be taken into another refuge. Most women would much prefer to remain in their own area and this is just not possible at the moment in Hackney.'

Jennifer Davies who has recently been in the news connected with an appeal under the Domestic Violence Act is just one of the women who had no choice as to whether she could go to a refuge in her own area or not. She and her child had to travel to Chiswick to escape from her brutal lover.

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act which came into force on 1 December encourages local councils to give financial and other support to organisations giving help to the homeless. Battered women are specifically defined as homeless under this Act. Hackney Women's Aid is hoping that this will prompt the Council to rectify the disgusting situation where in a borough of 2000,000 inhabitants battered women have nowhere to go.

Help is needed to put pressure on the Council to start the reconstruction of proper refuges for battered women. Contact Katrina, 249 4802 or Judy 986 8111 ext 57 (day) or 534 5492 (evening).

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It is now known that this computer - besides storing car and driver licence details (provided by the Swansea centre of the Department of the Environment) - is being used to file other information which the police find interesting.

An incident reported last year illustrated this. A police constable at an M6 motorway service station was suspicious of a Ford Cortina left unattended for five hours. He checked the car with the Police Computer and was told that

the owner was "a prominent member of the Anti-Blood Sports League." That evening this policeman saw on the TV news that the grave of John Peel, the famous huntsman, had been desecrated in Cumbria, 60 miles away. The car's owner was traced and three men were arrested and convicted.

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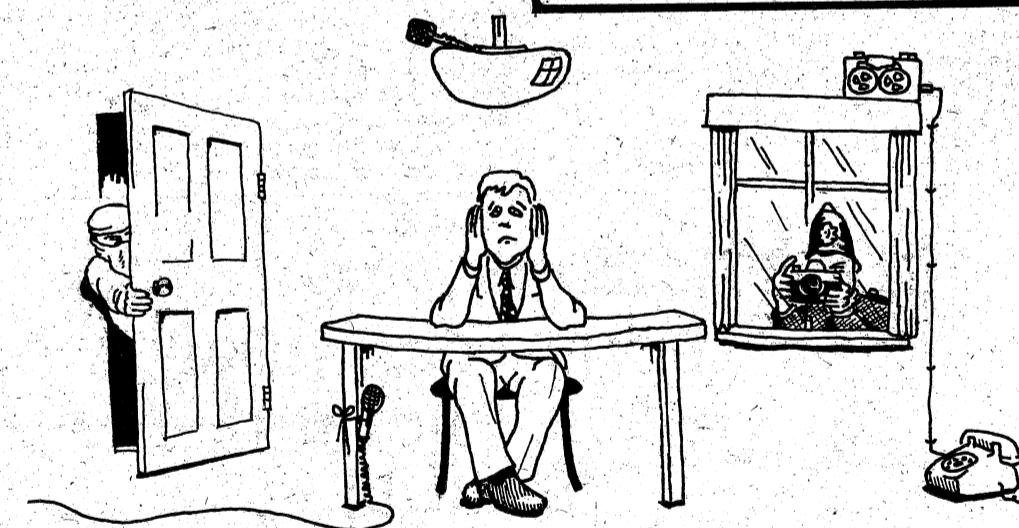
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They know a lot about us, and they want to know a good deal more. Who are they, and how do they find out their information? Below we illustrate recent cases where official spying has been carried out and examine the whole mechanism of the security of the State and the secret - sometimes illegal - way in which the State operates.

Case 2

In February last year John Berry, an ex-Royal Signals Lance-Corporal, wrote to the National Council for Civil Liberties (which is a well-respected body supported by more than 100 MPs and others concerned with preserving the rights and liberties of ordinary people in this country) expressing his concern about the threatened deportation of two American journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. He made a statement to the NCCL saying that the Government's action demonstrated "clearly its very real fear that certain murky facts from which it will derive no credit and which may lead to exposure of the apparatus which could transform Britain into a police state overnight should the need arise, are not so far from the public eye as it had previously thought".

Somehow this statement was leaked to Britain's secret police, the security service, MI5. Two journalists, Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, both involved in the Agee-Hosenball Defence Campaign arranged to visit John Berry. This meeting was arranged at short notice by phone. As Campbell and Aubrey left Berry's flat, with a tape recording of a 3 hour long conversation they were arrested by Special Branch police officers and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

MI5 could only have known about this meeting by use of a "tap" on one of the three telephones, probably Berry's. "Taps" are all supposed to be approved by the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, before they are imposed. In fact, Rees didn't know that the arrests were likely until after they had been made.

Now Aubrey, Berry and Campbell - known as ABC for obvious reasons - are to be tried at the Old Bailey in a full-blown secrets trial, probably in the autumn. When the committal hearing took place in November the magistrates refused to allow defence lawyers to ask the police how they got their information about the meeting. Unauthorised spying by the state on private conversations was not deemed "relevant evidence".

The prosecution are alleging that the three defendants were endangering national security. In fact, although the tape was only played in secret in the court with press and public excluded, there is no doubt that the hazy seven-year-old memories of a former minor cog in Britain's defence wheel are of minor importance. ABC are on trial because faceless men, who work in plush offices in Mayfair, decided that investigative journalists wanted to know too much about what they do. And who are they? Not even Parliament has any control over them. They are not answerable to the people in any way. They just think that they know best.

directly on the payroll of MI5. Carl Bernstein, the American reporter who helped to uncover the Watergate scandal has recently published a list of American journalists paid by the CIA. David Holden, the "Sunday Times" journalist murdered recent in Egypt was strongly suspected of being employed by British Intelligence - as are many other foreign correspondents.

The other main source of information is photographs. Press photographs are scanned by MI5 and added to those taken by police photographers with sophisticated cameras of any political activity. Thus faces can be added to the names on the files. These photographers are very camera-shy themselves and often retreat quickly if anyone starts taking snapshots of them.

All in all, MI5 acts in a highly secretive manner. Potential employees are vetted very thoroughly before they even know who they are going to work for. Any political views to the left of Margaret Thatcher are considered unsuitable. Unlike other Civil Servants they are not answerable to the people at all - even through MPs. The police are controlled by local authorities and the Home Secretary. No Minister controls the activities of MI5, not even the Home Secretary. The Director of MI5, Sir Martin Hanley, has the right to be answerable only to the Prime Minister. But they act independently of Prime Ministers, as Sir Harold Wilson has recently proved. MI5 is nothing but a self-appointed reactionary clique hiding behind a cloak of "national security".

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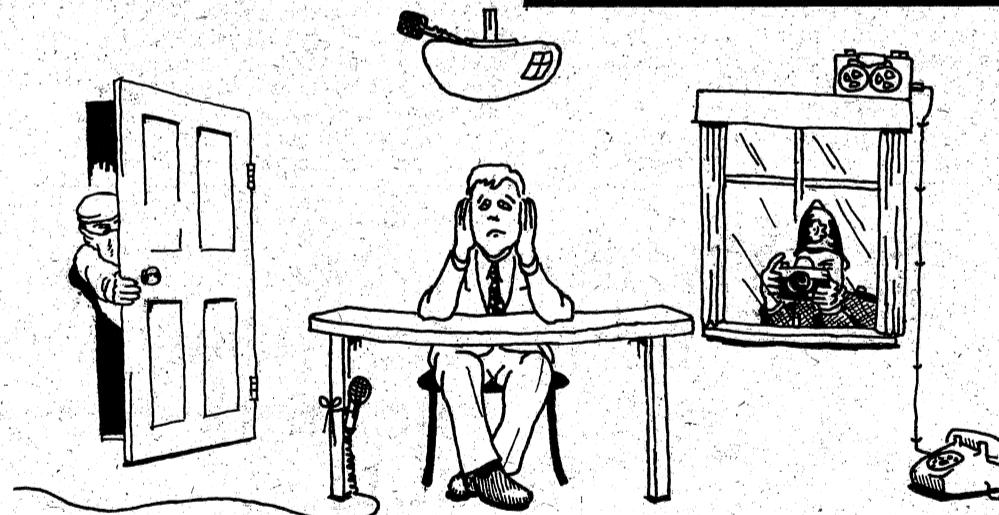
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They know a lot about us, and they want to know a good deal more. Who are they, and how do they find out their information? Below we illustrate recent cases where official spying has been carried out and examine the whole mechanism of the security of the State and the secret - sometimes illegal - way in which the State operates.

Case 2

In February last year John Berry, an ex-Royal Signals Lance-Corporal, wrote to the National Council for Civil Liberties (which is a well respected body supported by more than 100 MPs and others concerned with preserving the rights and liberties of ordinary people in this country) expressing his concern about the threatened deportation of two American journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball. He made a statement to the NCLL saying that the Government's action demonstrated "clearly its very real fear that certain murky facts from which it will derive no credit and which may lead to exposure of the apparatus which could transform Britain into a police state overnight should the need arise, are not so far from the public eye as it had previously thought".

Somehow this statement was leaked to Britain's secret police, the security service, MI5. Two journalists, Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, both involved in the Agee-Hosenball Defence Campaign arranged to visit John Berry. This meeting was arranged at short notice by phone. As Campbell and Aubrey left Berry's flat, with a tape recording of a 3 hour long conversation they were arrested by Special Branch police officers and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

MI5 could only have known about this meeting by use of a "tap" on one of the three telephones, probably Berry's. "Taps" are all supposed to be approved by the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, before they are imposed. In fact, Rees didn't know that the arrests were likely until after they had been made.

Now Aubrey, Berry and Campbell - known as ABC for obvious reasons - are to be tried at the Old Bailey in a full-blown secrets trial, probably in the autumn. When the committal hearing took place in November the magistrates refused to allow defence lawyers to ask the police how they got their information about the meeting. Unauthorised spying by the state on private conversations was not deemed "relevant evidence".

The prosecution are alleging that the three defendants were endangering national security. In fact, although the tape was only played in secret in the court with press and public excluded, there is no doubt that the hazy seven-year-old memories of a former minor cog in Britain's defence wheel are of minor importance. ABC are on trial because faceless men, who work in plush offices in Mayfair, decided that investigative journalists wanted to know too much about what they do. And who are they? Not even Parliament has any control over them. They are not answerable to the people in any way. They just think that they know best.

directly on the payroll of MI5. Carl Bernstein, the American reporter who helped to uncover the Watergate scandal has recently published a list of American journalists paid by the CIA. David Holden, the "Sunday Times" journalist murdered recent in Egypt - was strongly suspected of being employed by British Intelligence - as are many other foreign correspondents.

The other main source of information is photographs. Press photographs are scanned by MI5 and added to those taken by police photographers with sophisticated cameras of any political activity. Thus faces can be added to the names on the files. These photographers are very camera-shy themselves and often retreat quickly if anyone starts taking snaps of them.

All in all, MI5 acts in a highly secretive manner. Potential employees are vetted very thoroughly before they even know who they are going to work for. Any political views to the left of Margaret Thatcher are considered unsuitable. Unlike other Civil Servants they are not answerable to the people at all - even through MPs. The police are controlled by local authorities and the Home Secretary. No Minister controls the activities of MI5, not even the Home Secretary. The Director of MI5, Sir Martin Hanley, has the right to be answerable only to the Prime Minister. But they act independently of Prime Ministers, as Sir Harold Wilson has recently proved. MI5 is nothing but a self-appointed reactionary clique hiding behind a cloak of "national security".

FIGHT FOR THE
RIGHT TO KNOW!!

Just MI5, the police, the DHSS and your Boss...

Case 3

Evidence that the Special Branch passes on information about the political activities of employees to their employers came to light when British Steel workers occupied their Greenwich factory in May last year.

There they discovered files that showed that after a request from management, a Special Branch officer visited the works manager. He told the works manager that Scotland Yard had a file on one of the workers which showed that he distributed "National Socialist Front" literature, that he had "disturbed the peace" during a demonstration and that he had taken part in an "illegal" demonstration.

This file shows again how inaccurate is the political information gathered by the Special Branch and MI5. There is no "National Socialist Front" organisation - presumably the literature was produced by the International Socialists. The worker had never been arrested during a demonstration and demonstrations are not "illegal" in Britain - yet.

The Greenwich factory workers also discovered that the management had approached the "independent" right-wing organisation, the Economic League, for information about their employees.

British Steel is a nationalised company owned by you, the taxpayer. Yet it gets information about its own employees from secret police files and from big business sponsored organisations. What kind of public concern is that?

Researchers are correct when they say that more than eleven hundred officers are engaged in Special Branch activities throughout the country.

Special Branch

The Special Branch is a section of the police force, and its officers are all from the ranks of the police: in fact, they are looked down on by the CID, who regard them all as "failed detectives".

To some extent their activities overlap with those of MI5 and because they have powers of arrest, which MI5 does not, they always act as arresting officers in cases passed on by MI5. This can be difficult for them, as they are often given little notice: when Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell were arrested in February the Special Branch officers set off to take them to Muswell Hill Police Station, 1½ miles away. Because they did not know the area at all, the journey took them 1½ hours!

Special Branch officers gather intelligence in much the same ways as does MI5, and all their records are available at all times to MI5. They have access also to any interesting information acquired by the uniformed police or CID after a raid - letters, diaries, address books - which they file in much the same way.

Also Special Branch take responsibility for policing trials of members of certain groups - Irish, trade union and political or cases involving black people - and watch those who help the defence. At the Angry Brigade trial in 1972, the prosecution lawyers had detailed files on the character and activities of several defence witnesses within minutes of their appearance in court.

Many people perhaps do not realise how wide Special Branch's coverage of political events is. The general orders for the Metropolitan police say that the Branch must be informed in advance of all political meetings by local police stations, and should Special Branch officers not attend, a report is then forwarded to them. And if anyone is arrested for minor political offences, such as breaches of the peace, or slogan-daubing, then general orders say that "enquiry is to be made of Special Branch to ascertain whether anything is known about the accused before the case is dealt with at Court".

Being policemen, the Special Branch are under control of the various police authorities. However, Chief Constables up and down the country are reluctant to mention in their annual reports what their Special Branches have been doing, and even how many officers are in the Branch. Nor are the Home Office any more forthcoming. In a reply to Robin Cook MP in Parliament last year a junior minister said that reports of a five-fold increase in Branch officers were exaggerated. But Mr Cook and other

Official Secrets Act

The British Official Secrets Act is the most effective law to stop the disclosure of official information in the Western world. Originally passed during a spate of spy hysteria before World War 1, it has since been used most often to silence civil servants and severely punish leakages to the press.

The first Official Secrets Act was drafted in 1911 by MI5 itself and passed through parliament in just half an hour. At the time, the intention of the Act was said to be 'to deter foreign spies'.

The law divides into two main sections. Section One, though known as the 'spying clause', can in fact be used 'if any person for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State' approaches a prohibited place.

This includes Her Majesty's Stationery Office in Holborn. It also makes it an offence to receive

Other Cases

Files are kept on all of us in all sorts of other ways by all of the State's agencies. Space does not permit us to detail individual cases but recent evidence has shown that:

- A single mother on social security had a DHSS file which said that she was "neurotic" and needed "father figures" and criticised her political views.
- An ex-student couldn't understand why he was always turned down for jobs after interviews. Then he found out that his former professor had written a reference mentioning a mental illness that he had never had.
- A couple wanted to know why the NSPCC demanded to see their child and discovered that their health visitor's

Secrets Act. This includes civil servants, the armed forces, police, prison officers, postmen and telephone operators, as well as people working on state contracts in industry. Its provisions are a daily reminder to them not to reveal the most trivial details of their work.

Only this year, a clerk in the Department of Health and Social Security in Birmingham was threatened with the Act because he had complained in the press about low wages. He was subsequently demoted. The law is supremely effective in limiting the flow of information from Government departments.

Laws already exist in the United States and Sweden which would considerably improve the British situation. Transposed to this country, these would limit the Official Secrets Act to genuine spying for a hostile foreign power, and produce a Freedom of Information Act to allow the public and press to have proper access to Government

file said that the child was battered - which it wasn't.

- A father found out that his son's school record said the boy was a thief - although the headmaster said that the allegation had been withdrawn.

Wrong information like this is filed away all the time. Computers mean that it is much more easy for the State to invade our privacy every day. The Police National Computer - see Case 1 - has been programmed so that it can tap personal records from virtually any other computer in the country, without permission and without being detected by the banks or travel services or Government departments who own them. And this information has not been revealed by left-wing journalists but by the British Computer Society. Who is watching you tonight?

particular". It produces large numbers of leaflets for distribution in factories and workplaces and runs courses for supervisory staff. But it also provides undercover information about what it regards as "subversive" forces and individuals, as was seen in the case of British Steel mentioned above.

What is even more disturbing is the inaccuracy of its information. The League is known to have told one car body firm that an applicant for a job was a Communist Party candidate and Morning Star writer. Neither of these facts were true.

The Economic League backers read like the pages of the Financial Times. They receive money and support from Shell, British Leyland, Burtons, Granada, Allied Breweries - the list goes on.

The Institute for the Study of Conflict is an organisation founded by the CIA, the American Intelligence Service. But it also keeps a watchful eye on British political activity, supplying information to British newspapers. A recent case was a story in the Daily Mail about the 'Militant' tendency in the Labour Party, when file copies of Militant newspaper were supplied from the Institute's library.

Taps and Bugs

Although many people think that their phones are tapped or their homes bugged, it is unlikely that the Special Branch and MI5 in fact do bug people all the time. They do, however, have the technology to do this and can act very fast without getting the necessary warrant from the Home Secretary. And they can listen in without making suspicious clicks on the line. Most phones that are tapped are those of organisations or groups which get a lot of calls - both the NCC and Time Out were told anonymously that their phones were being tapped the weekend that Aubrey, Berry and Campbell were arrested.

It seems that mail-opening is a practice which is more widely carried out. The Post Office has a special Investigation Branch, to which letters of subversive organisations are taken before being delivered. In particular, it seems that letters from Ireland very rarely arrive without being tampered with.

Probably the only thing that stops further direct surveillance of both individuals and groups is the sheer manpower needed to process the intelligence received. With the rapid increase in the numbers of our official spies, it may not be long before even more of us are watched directly.



or communicate information that might be 'directly or indirectly useful to an enemy'. An "enemy" in peacetime extends to any country with which Britain could be at war. The penalty for such a vague offence is up to 14 years in prison.

Section Two is even broader, and makes it illegal to communicate or receive any official information whose disclosure has not been authorised. This could include anything from plans for new hospitals to the financing of Concorde. Penalty: up to two years' prison.

There is little doubt on whose side the law falls. Unlike most charges, it is up to the defendants to prove their innocence rather than the other way round.

The Act also allows 'known character or conduct' to be brought in as evidence - which in practice means a wide range of defamatory material.

Tens of thousands of people in Britain are covered by the Official

information. The Labour Party is already committed to this through its 1974 election manifesto. This promised: 'We shall replace the Official Secrets Act by a measure to put the burden on the public authorities to justify withholding information'. But in Government, with pressure brought on them by the faceless men they are unlikely to move that far.

'Independent' Spies

In addition to the surveillance of political activity by Government agencies, there are a number of "independent" organisations involved also. Chief among these are two groups, the Economic League and the Institute for the Study of Conflict.

The Economic League was set up in 1919 to "actively oppose all subversive forces ... that seek to undermine the security of Britain in general and British industry in

CHATS PALACE

Chats Palace, the one-time Homerton Public Library in Brooksby's Walk is to be converted into a fully equipped community centre using money from the Job Creation Programme.

Chats Palace has been open for some two years and is the base of the Homerton Community Project but has lacked many of the facilities to make it the successful community centre that Homerton needs. When the work is completed the centre will have a new lounge and coffee bar, a theatre, workshops for printing, photography and carpentry and its own garden.

Free Form, the community arts group, will act as sponsors for the £20,000 job creation programme which will employ thirteen people for six months. These jobs will go to Hackney unemployed and will include nine young labourers, three skilled tradesmen and a supervisor.

This project is also to receive £1,500 from the borough of Hackney who provide the building rate and rent free and also the Hackney Marsh Fun Festival. It is also hoped to raise further money in grants from the Arts Council and the Greater London Arts Association.

The work starts on 23 January and should interfere as little as possible with the present activities at Chats Palace, and the workshops will be open as usual during the Easter holidays.

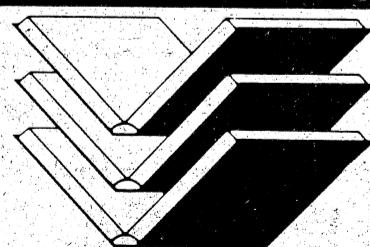
SOCIALISM FOR HACKNEY?

Hackney WEA has organised a special series of classes entitled "A Socialist Strategy for Hackney". These are to be held on Sunday mornings from 11 am-1 pm, starting on Sunday 5 February, under the joint chairmanship of Stuart Weir and Jon Webber. They will cover subjects such as Local Government Finance and Structure, Housing Management and Development, Social Services, Employment, Leisure Sports and Services, Planning, and general strategy.

The classes are to be held either at the new Trades Hall at 94 Dalston Lane, E8 or at the Town Hall.

Further information from Jon Webber or Stuart Weir, Hackney WEA, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

BOOK JUNCTION



84 DALSTON LANE · LONDON E8

We stock a vast range of general fiction, political literature, children's books and have a second hand section.

We also have international newspapers, magazines and pamphlets.

We will order any book for you

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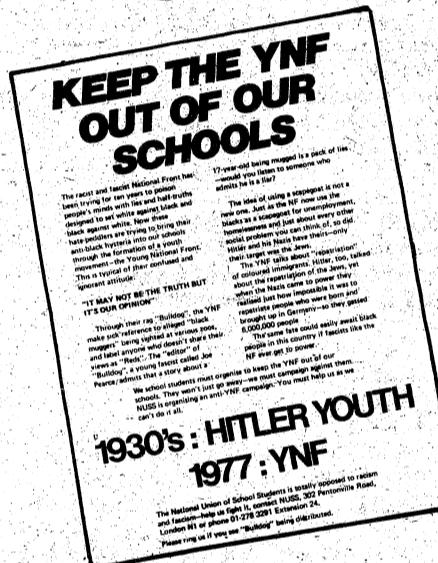
Open Mon-Fri 9am-8pm
Sat 9am-5.30pm

more short news

NF ONTO KIDS

The National Front are trying to get more young members. They have lowered the age of joining to 14, and have set up a youth section. The reason for doing this seems to be that they must capture their members young if they are to keep them. (An idea copied from Hitler). Their campaign includes the production of a handout for young people - "Bulldog".

The first issue was of 400 copies distributed to schools in Hackney and three other boroughs, the second issue printed 600 copies, while 2,000 copies of the November issue were distributed at schools mainly in North and East London. The National Union of School Students have produced a leaflet to counter this propaganda (see inset).



The violence of the National Front which has always been apparent (eg the five attacks on Enterprise bookshop during the course of the last year) has begun to take on even more revolting shape. During the recent school holidays a twelve year old boy was attacked by five adults, who at three o'clock in the afternoon chased him down the street shouting 'Up the National Front, Wogs Out'. When they caught up with him these brave thugs broke a bottle and rammed it into his side, which resulted in this boy spending New Year's Day in St Leonards Hospital.

As a result of the increasing distribution of NF propaganda to young people a group of workers in youth clubs, playgrounds and school has started to meet in order to work against the fascist menace. Workers with Youth Against Fascism are already producing the first in a series of posters based on particular fascist policies. The series will include the NF's attitude to women, the unemployed, physically handicapped and other groups, making it clear that the NF are not just threatening to the black community, but also threatening to women, the unemployed etc.

Members of Workers With Youth Against Fascism also had a meeting with Cardinal Basil Hume in December to discuss the role of the Church in combatting fascism.

The next meeting of the group is on Thursday 26 January. For further details of this and other activities phone 226 3304 or write to Box 1933, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Sexual Discrimination against M.P.

A controversy has arisen over the sacking of Maureen Colquhoun, Labour MP for Northampton, by her management committee. She has been accused of being a racist and of not sufficiently serving her constituency. More important, however, the argument seems to have centred around her sexuality, because Ms Colquhoun is a Lesbian. The other accusations do not stand up under scrutiny, and it appears that the only crime she has committed is, perhaps, of being discreet and choosing unfortunate phraseology to express some of her views. She is not supported by all feminists, as her record, for example, on the abortion issue is not a particularly good one; she left the country during one of the most crucial debates in the fight against the Benyon Anti-Abortion Bill.

However, none of these charges justifies her sacking. The only possible conclusion is that her Lesbianism is being held against her.

Maureen Colquhoun lives in Hackney, and the Maureen Colquhoun Action Committee is based in Hackney. We print below an article from the MCAC describing their aims and activities.

The Committee was set up three months ago, by a group of Lesbians and a few gay men, who were angry about Maureen Colquhoun's sacking by Northampton North Labour Party Management Committee. There were a lot of accusations made about Ms Colquhoun, which we investigate below, as we believe that Maureen Colquhoun had been sacked as a Lesbian, not as a racist or as an unsatisfactory MP.

The most difficult of the charges to refute has been that of racism. Although since retracted by Northampton, it has prevented many groups from supporting us. The statement by Ms Colquhoun that "Powell is not a racist", has been blown up out of context by both the straight and revolutionary press, and her continued explanations of her real position ignored. In fact, it was a clumsy expression of her view that "Powell is not the real Bogeyman". The real Bogeymen are in the Labour Party, who use soft words and put no money into solving the problem of poor blacks and poor whites in the inner cities". As a local councillor in 1972, she was voted off her committees for advocating positive housing discrimination in favour of poor blacks. She has said that she deplores Powell's "appalling racist solutions", whilst pointing out where the power to change the situation lies. Uncomfortable for the Labour Party. Are these the views and actions of a racist?

The other two main charges against her were of "neglecting her constituency" and of spending too much time on "trivial issues". The first would appear to have no factual basis at all, her surgery attendance being 85% (higher than most MPs). The other 15% is accountable for in speaking engagements, in and out of Northampton, and attendance at Parliamentary debates. In addition, she has spent 25 out of 28 weekends working in the constituency. The "trivial issues" have been such things as abortion on demand, action for Lesbian parents, and working against the discrimination women face in the job creation schemes, and in government posts. As Lesbians, an unrepresented and invisible section of the population, and as women, half of the country, we do not see these issues as trivial. Rather, we see it as vital to campaign as vigor-

ously as possible for the retaining of the only MP who speaks for us.

The attack on Maureen Colquhoun is an attack on all women, and just one public example of the current backlash against oppressed and dissenting groups in this country. Many women face the kind of discrimination that Ms Colquhoun is facing now, in their dealings with the courts, doctors, psychiatrists, welfare services, etc. Any well-known Lesbian is a powerful source of support to other Lesbians and a public example of an independent lifestyle for all women. Norman Ashby, chairperson of Northampton North Labour Party Management Committee, has said that Maureen Colquhoun was originally adopted as candidate because of her "good family image" supposedly necessary to fit in with the "conventional morality of a marginal working class constituency". As a Lesbian she no longer fulfils his requirements.

Our first action was to put out a statement on the facts which we sent to groups and individuals nationwide, and which has been widely endorsed by such varying types as the Northampton West Indian Parents Association, who clearly find her neither racist, nor immoral, and Jeff Tordaff, chairperson of the Liberal Party. We did a lobby of Parliament, and a picket of Transport House, when Maureen Colquhoun was meeting with the Labour Party National Executive Committee, for them to decide whether Northampton North should re-vote on her re-adoption. The lobby was all women, as the Committee is now all Lesbian, as we feel this makes an important point about Lesbians standing up and being counted, invisible and weak no longer. The picket, however, was mixed, and we still have a lot of support and help from a variety of people, men and women, who are concerned about Maureen Colquhoun's sacking.

If you wish to support us in any way, please phone 450 3806 or 624 6364. Donations and stamps to 5 Grove Dwellings, Adelina Grove, London E1.

RECIPE CHEESE CAKE

You can buy ready-made cheese cake in most big stores nowadays. But much nicer is the type you can make yourself. This recipe is for the cooked kind - it costs about £1 a pound to buy in bakeries. You can make a big tin for about 70p. It's what we were eating all day when we were producing this edition!

PAstry:

3 oz plain flour, 1½ oz butter, 1 oz caster sugar, yolk of one egg, little water.

Rub butter into dough. Add sugar, egg yolk and water. Mix to soft dough. Roll out pastry to fit bottom of tin only. Prick with a fork and bake at Reg 6/400° for about 10-15 minutes, until a pale biscuit colour.

Filling:

½ lb curd cheese, 2 oz butter, yolks of 2 eggs, 4 oz caster sugar, few drops vanilla essence, grated rind of 1 lemon, 3 egg whites, 1 oz plain flour. Beat the yolks, sugar, vanilla essence and lemon rind well together. Add curd cheese and melted butter. Beat very well until smooth. Whip egg whites until thick and fold them into the mix with the flour. Pour onto the cooked pastry base, lightly brush the top with beaten eggs or milk and cook at Reg 4/350° for 35-40 minutes, until the top is golden and firm. Best left for a day before eating. Cut into slices out of the tin.

Information

All listings on this page are inserted absolutely FREE.
For the next issue, just send us your information by
Friday 27 January.

Write to Hackney People's Press, Box 1, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E.8.

Community, Tenants and Pensioners Groups

HACKNEY PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION

34 Dalston Lane, E8. Advice service on Tuesday and Thursdays from 10.30 to 4pm. Tea Bar Monday to Friday 10.30 to 4pm.

TASK FORCE

34 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 1620. Free advice for pensioners in Hackney. Odd jobs and visits in N16 and N4 only. Pensioners activities and neighbourhood care in N5.

HACKNEY ASSOCIATION FOR WELFARE OF OLD PEOPLE

22 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 0715.

HARAMBEE 2 PROJECT

Upper Clapton Congregational Hall, E5. Social and advice centre, aimed particularly at black people. Tuesday 10am-10pm. Thursday 10am-4.30pm. Friday 10am-10pm.

OFF CENTRE

25 Hackney Grove, E8. Tel. 985 8566. Advice for young people between 13 and 25 with any problems. Monday-Friday 10am-6pm (open until 8.30pm on Tuesdays).

FRIENDS ANONYMOUS SERVICE

Friendship House, 27 Hackney Grove, E8. 24 hour telephone service with people always willing to listen and act. 986 2232 (24 hours). 985 0973 (office hours) 86 9146.

HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS FEDERATION

Contact Bob Darke, 254 Trelawney Estate, Paragon Road, E9 for details. Represents Borough Council, GLC and private tenants throughout Hackney.

HACKNEY GINGERBREAD

Group for one parent families. Meets every Monday at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16. Creche available. Contact Teresa Blackhall, 729 1647 for details.

HOMERTON GINGERBREAD

Group for one parent families. Meets every other Friday at the Wally Foster Centre. Contact 985 3972 for details.

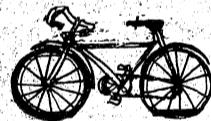
HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS ASSOCIATION

c/o 35 Finmere House, Woodberry Down, N4.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGLISH CLASSES

Held at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16. Tel: 254 1193. Monday-Friday 10.30am-4.30pm. Held at the Wally Foster Centre, E8. Tel. 985 3972. Every Wednesday 1.30pm.

Transport



HACKNEY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACTION COMMITTEE

Meets regularly to discuss how to improve public transport in Hackney. Contact Tony Jacobs, 3 Hackley House, Morning Lane, E9. Tel: 986 2303.

HACKNEY CYCLISTS ACTION GROUP

Fighting for cycle tracks and better provisions for cyclists. Contact Michael Ellman, 21 Arlington Square, N1. Tel. 226 1887.

Women

HACKNEY ABORTION CAMPAIGN

Meetings fortnightly at 16 Parkholme Road, E8. Contact 249 3768 for details.

WOMEN'S CENTRE

1 Cazenove Road, N16. Advice, creche, children's clothes swap shop, beginners photography, crafts, yoga, relaxation, consciousness raising groups, food co-op, alternative medicine, self-defence. Further information from 806 6664. All women welcome.

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

Tel. 340 6145. 24 hour information and advice.

HACKNEY SOCIALIST-FEMINIST GROUP

Meet alternate Mondays at the Factory, Matthias Road, N16, at 7.30pm. Contact Pat 254 5821 or Harriet 254 5208.

HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL WOMEN'S SUB COMMITTEE

Re-formed recently. Meets once a month. Contact Judy Newcombe, 254 0685 for details. All women and men welcome.

Health

CITY AND HACKNEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road, E2. Tel. 739 6308/8351. The public's voice in the NHS—provides advice, takes up your complaints and criticisms. Open meeting on 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6.30pm. Publishes **HEALTH IN HACKNEY**: a comprehensive FREE guide to health facilities and services in the area.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN HACKNEY

Advice, ideas, information. Trying to contact all families in district with a handicapped child. Contact Ann Purdon, 48 Mount Pleasant Lane, E5. Tel. 808 8438.

THE BIRTH CENTRE

188 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 251 4076. Information, advice, lectures and seminars on birth at home and in hospital. Open evening every Wednesday 8pm. 25p.

Advice

Free legal advice on housing, landlord and tenant, employment, social security, welfare, matrimonial, immigration and discrimination problems can be obtained from the following centres:

CENTERPRISE

136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9632. THURSDAYS 6.30-7.30pm.

HOXTON HALL

128a Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 5431. WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm.

KINGSMEAD

Wally Foster Centre, Hornerton High Street, E9. Tel. 985 3804. TUESDAYS 7-8pm.

SNAGS

102 Manor Road, N16. Tel. 800 3770. MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm. (802 7949).

ALLEN ROAD

12 Allen Road, N16. THURSDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from:

HACKNEY ADVICE BUREAU & LAW CENTRE

236-8 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8446. Open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm (7.30 on Thursdays).

Legal aid and advice on housing, rents, repairs and employment problems.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

1-11 Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 4654. 106 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 253 2155.

HACKNEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

245 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 985 5244. TUESDAYS 7-8.30pm.

Immigration, discrimination, housing law and other problems.

THE FAMILY CENTRE

50 Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 249 8334.

Information and help in all community problems. Cooking, washing, creche facilities. Open all day.

HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE

302-4 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8123.

Helps with all housing problems. Repairs, rebates, landlord/tenant, council/tenant.

HACKNEY CENTRAL INFORMATION BUREAU

Town Hall, Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 3123.

HACKNEY NORTH LABOUR PARTY ADVICE CENTRE

5 Stamford Hill, N16.

Advice and information on legal, financial, welfare, housing, social security and personal problems. FRIDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from HARIBEE 2 PROJECT, OFF CENTRE and FRIENDS ANONYMOUS. See Community Groups listing on this page.

For MPs and councillors Advice surgeries see LABOUR PARTY under POLITICAL GROUPS listing on this page.

FOOD

DOWN TO EARTH

Durham Row, Stepney Green, E1. Tel. 790 3512.

Wholefood shop selling grains, flour, beans, honey, herbs etc.

Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm.

FOOD FOR ALL

3 Cazenove Road, N16. Tel. 806 4138.

Wholefood shop, also selling books and crafts. All food carries levy to support the women's centre next door (see WOMEN) and proposed school at 5 Cazenove Road.

GAY SWITCHBOARD

Tel. 837 7324. 24 hour information and advice.

EAST LONDON FAGGOTS

Collective of gay socialists living and working in East London. Contact 19 Redmans Road, E1.

Tel. 790 2454.

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Collective of gay socialists living and working in East London. Contact 19 Redmans Road, E1.

Tel. 790 2454.

GAY SWITCHBOARD

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A Look Back At 1977...

February

Two Councillors were chucked out of the Labour Group over the proposed increases in Council rents and three others resigned from the Group in protest. In our first issue of 1977 we presented a history of successive rent increases since 1972 which might horrify those who look back on the repeal of the Housing Finance Act as a great victory for Council tenants.



May

With the GLC campaigns in full swing the HPP presented its own highly prejudiced guide to the warring parties. As it turned out the electorate didn't think London was looking half as good as Transport House did. In Hackney all three Labour candidates won comfortably. The most worrying feature was the size of the National Front vote, particularly in South and Central.



July

We showed how the closure of the Metropolitan Hospital has caused real suffering and put lives at risk.



September

As part of a wave of right-wing attacks on community and leftist bookshops, Centerprise was the victim of a fire-bomb attack. It happened on 15 August, just a week after the fracas at Lewisham, and caused more than £1,000 of damage.

The Gas Bag, the product of a summer youth project at Centerprise, also made its first appearance in this issue.



HPP fights for Hackney People

In May we gave you the facts behind the arrest of Crispin Aubrey who lives in De Beauvoir and is a reporter with 'Time Out' magazine along with freelance journalist Duncan Campbell and ex-army Lance-Corporal John Berry. On the basis of a conversation at Berry's home on 18 February the three have been charged under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act. In the course of the ensuing campaign we have learnt

that Big Brother is alive and well and currently residing at great expense to the taxpayer in Curzon Street House, Curzon Street, Mayfair (see page 4).

We have also reported on the fight to preserve and extend the present Abortion law, the ugly spectre of the NF, Hackney National Union of Teachers' resistance to compulsory transfers, the firemen's strike and the Half Moon's unsuccessful bid for Wilton's Music Hall.



HPP publicises community groups

In the November issue one article entitled 'The Scandal of Hackney's Empty Homes' outlined the reasons for the formation of the Hackney Community Housing Action Group. It will investigate the reasons why so many potentially decent homes are lying empty in a borough

with such enormous housing stress.

During 1977 we ran features on Centerprise, the Rio Cinema project, Chats Palace, the Hackney Marsh Fun Festival, the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, Women's Aid, the Community Health Council, Hackney Hospital Radio, Task Force



November

In the last issue as a PS to our feature on the Centerprise fire-bomb attack we posed the question 'After Lewisham ... Hackney?'

Well, perhaps the people of Hackney gave us part of the answer to that one on 16 October when thousands of them joined the Hackney Committee Against Racism's Anti-National Front march.



December

The announcement by Peter Shore of the inclusion of Hackney and Islington in the partnership scheme is the best news the Borough has had for a long time. But will the Council, suffering from the lethargy that hits any leadership when the only opposition comes from its own dissenters, make sure that Hackney gets its fair share of the bread? 1978 may provide part of the answer to that, but our article shows that the Council's track record leaves little reason for optimism.



AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD FOR HPP

In November we launched the first of the new monthly HPPs with its larger, more newspaper-like format.

This is the third issue of the restyled paper. The larger format means there will be more in each issue and by producing issues at regular monthly intervals, we will bring out twice as many HPPs in 1978 as we did in 1977.

We hope you agree with us that the change was worthwhile.